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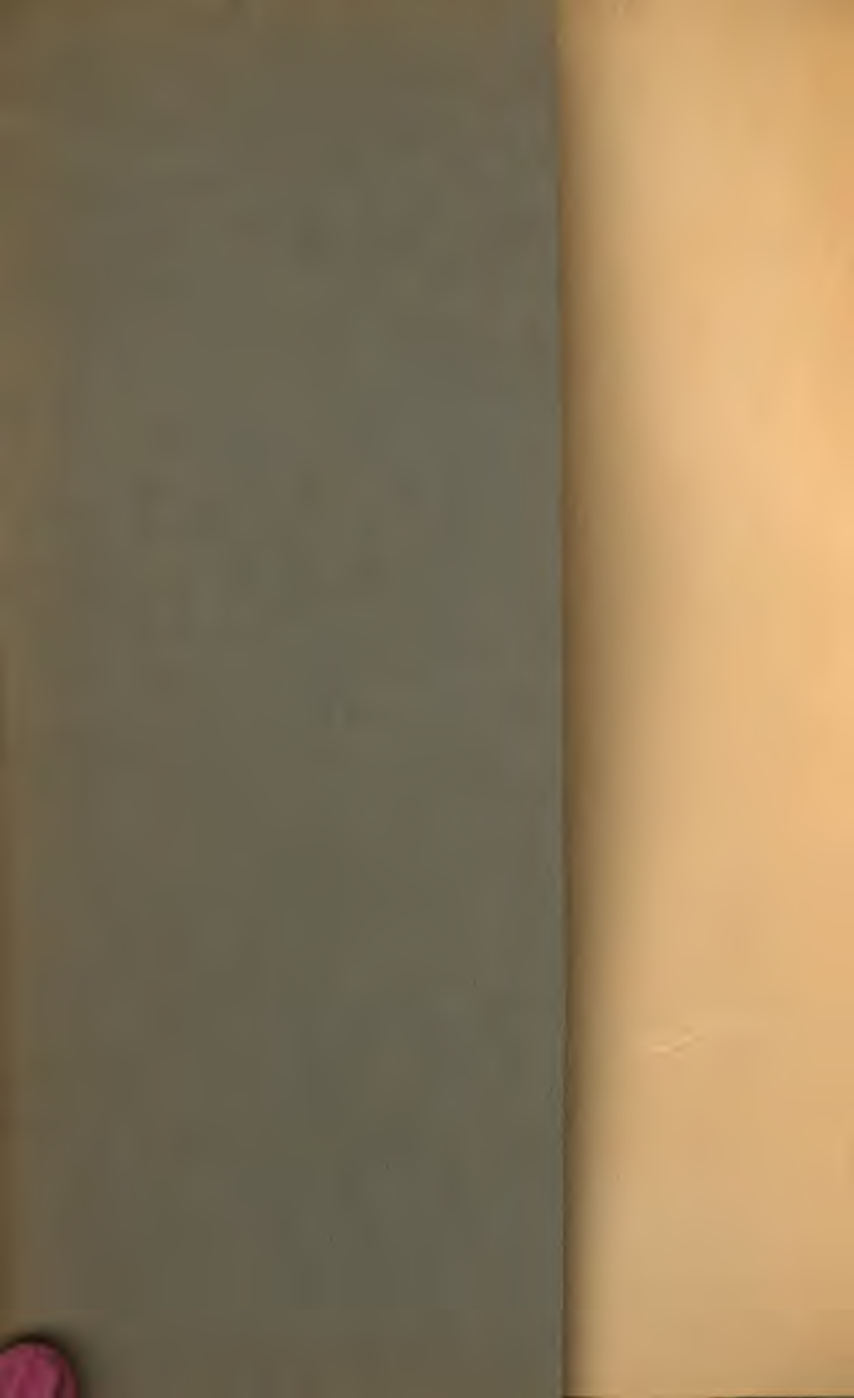


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# *The* SPIRIT OF SERVICE



JULIA TOLMAN LEE



# The Spirit of Service

SEVEN LESSONS ON CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP  
FOR CLASS AND DISCUSSION GROUPS

Arranged by  
JULIA TOLMAN LEE

*Finance Department, National Board,  
Young Womens Christian  
Associations*



NEW YORK

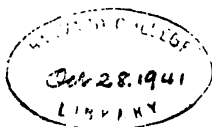
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## Foreword

**T**HIS little outline is intended to be a guide to discussion. It is an attempt to suggest the place of Christian Stewardship in ordinary living and thinking and to indicate that the spirit of service is the mainspring of constructive activities in our modern world.

Two fellow-workers, Miss Mabel K. Stafford and Miss Katharine Condon, have helped in planning Lessons III, V and VI.

J. T. L.

*New York City.*



## Suggestions for Study

**T**HESE lessons can be used as planned for seven discussion hours, or they can be divided and expanded if it seems desirable to have more time for reports on special topics and suggested reading.

If the leader and the members of the class will look over the course and become familiar with the order in which the subject is developed, they will avoid bringing up for immediate discussion in the first two lessons subjects dealt with later. If such questions arise it is suggested that they be written down on the blank page provided for that purpose after the lesson to which they most naturally apply. In that way they will not be forgotten. They will help to enrich the study of later lessons.

Throughout the course it is well to emphasize simple, direct, usable considerations, avoiding the temptation of futile argument and the tendency to keep dis-

cussion going until there is not time at the end of each lesson period for summarizing and arriving at some conclusions. It may not be advisable or necessary to determine definite percentages of time, money, strength and talents. The emphasis is better placed upon those principles which can guide the individual in planning the whole life as it expresses itself in service to others. Such a mode of study quickens the sense of personal responsibility and takes into account that "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal."—I Cor. 12: 4-7.

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## LESSON I

### CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

**"Christian stewardship rests on the custom and law of olden time, the new view taught by Christ, the great law of love and service, the imperative call of a great world task and the need of our own nature to find its noblest expression."**

**"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," Matt. 6: 33.**

**"This is the only generation in which *we* can do *our* part to save the world."**

**"Man is a steward; to different men are given different possessions; each one is to trade with the talents entrusted to him, but all are to give an account to the Master."—*Lyman Abbott*.**

#### **1. The Need for Stewardship:**

**"The need of the hour is an entire consecration of life with all its possessions."**

**—*Roger Babson*.**

"The spirit of good-will among men rests on spiritual forces; the hope of a brotherhood of humanity reposes on the deeper fact of the Fatherhood of God—these spiritual forces are the one hope for a permanent foundation of World Peace."—*Lloyd George*.

## II. The Opportunities of Stewardship:

1. The prayers for "open doors" have been answered geographically! The whole world is a neighborhood. Never before was it so true that "None of us liveth to himself and no man dieth to himself." Race intermingling, developed communication, closer business relationships are all playing their part. The whole world is a neighborhood which should become a brotherhood.

"For a new world order there must be a burning missionary faith, an apostleship ready for all sacrifice."—*Israel Zangwill*.

"The only final solution is in the principles of Christ."—*Lord Robert Cecil*.

2. The goal toward which we must steadily work is Christ's vision of the

Kingdom of God here among men. Each person must decide for himself what means he will employ to serve the coming of the Kingdom.

"The international contacts of diplomacy, commerce and education will not wait for a slow-footed Christianity; and if we do not hasten, they will be established without Christian ideals and inspiration."

"The purpose of God is to redeem all of human life in all its relations. Home, church, industry, the state and the world must be made Christian."—*Rall*.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

What are some of the outstanding *problems* of the world today?

How are they manifesting themselves in our community?

What are some of the world *perils* today?

What are some of the world *opportunities* today?

When we speak of the obligation of the state, the church, the schools, to better conditions, do we think of ourselves as responsible units in each of these?

Are there economic, political, religious, social conditions in our own community which call for our best effort?

What can we do?

What do we mean by the Kingdom of God?

What do we desire when we pray "Thy Kingdom Come" ?



## LESSON II

### THE LAW OF SERVICE

#### I. The Nature of Stewardship:

"Our life is a manifestation of what we think about God."

"Life itself is a stewardship obligation and all the things we do in the course of life should be a continuous acknowledgment of that obligation."

—*Canon Prichard.*

"For in Him we live and move and have our being."—Acts 17: 28.

It is an obligation to live life at its best in order to make the Kingdom of God a reality here and now.

"Our wills are ours, we know not how  
Our wills are ours to make them thine."

—*Tennyson.*

#### II. The Two-fold Relationship of Stewardship:

##### 1. Between man and God.

In conscious communion for worship, guidance, courage, wisdom.

2. Between man and his fellowmen.  
In helpful brotherhood of service.

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

—Matt. 22: 37-40; Luke 10: 27-37.

“Love is the fulfilling of the law.”

—Rom. 13: 10.

“Be ye doers of the word, not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”

—James 1: 22.

### III. The Recognition of Stewardship:

“The recognition of stewardship marks the supremacy of spiritual man.”

—*Harvey Reeves Calkins.*

This recognition involves the admission that:—

1. God is the owner of all things.

—Psa. 24: 1, 50: 10-12; Hag. 2: 8.

2. Man is a steward and ought to give account of all that is entrusted to him.
3. God's ownership and man's stewardship should be definitely acknowledged.

We must deepen and quicken our sense of individual responsibility for the use of our

Time.

Strength	{	Physical vigor.
	{	Intellectual strength.
	{	Spiritual power.

Talents.

Income.

"Life itself is but the individual trusteeship of time."

"Every man is bound, by the gifts of health, intelligence, capacity and opportunity which God has given him, to put into the world at least as much as he takes out of it. Every man should be inspired to leave the world richer, better, nobler for his having lived in it."

—*Lyman Abbott.*

"We must strive by the consecration of wealth, of time and of service to lay up

treasure, that is the surplus energy of human toil for its sole, true end, the production of lasting character and happiness for all.”—*Sherwood Eddy*.

“Since God is the Creator of all of man, business instinct and administrative ability are among His creations. Since God is the source of brains, and laws and forces which make inventions and management possible and give them their value, these talents are just as sacred as the talents of oratory or prayer. God expects faith and system to go hand in hand on earth as they do in Heaven.”

—*Albert F. McGarrah*.

“It is not what we have in life, but our attitude toward it, how we view it, how we live it, where we put the emphasis that really counts. Putting the emphasis on trusteeship confers a new dignity on life, deepens our sense of responsibility and broadens our field of vision. We can never evade it. We can merely determine the quality of our living it. The choice is ours, the responsibility is ours, the trusteeship is ours.”—*William George Jordan*.

“Fellowship with the Eternal is the inspiration of life.”

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

What is a Christian Steward?

Is there a difference between *recognition* and *acknowledgment* of God's ownership?

What is the law of service?

Ought we to budget our time?

Are our homes and the organizations to which we belong expressions of shared responsibility and privilege?

Do they develop individual initiative and a sense of obligation to promote the welfare of others?

Does the idea of Stewardship bear upon our attitude toward the men and women employed in our homes? In our business?

What bearing has it upon our relationship toward those for whom we work? Upon our attitude toward our job?

To whom are we ultimately responsible?



## LESSON III

### THE WITNESS OF THE PAST

- I. Long before Moses or Abraham the custom obtained in such countries as Egypt, Assyria, Chaldea and Babylonia, of paying or dedicating a *tenth*.

#### *In Assyria:*

On Assyrian clay tablets as far back as 3800 B. C. the government's right to take a tenth for public uses is recognized.

#### *In Babylonia:*

The code of Hammurabi of the Babylonians and other inscriptions of that period (2500-2100 B. C.) reveal that there were agencies in the temples which made loans for business purposes, gave seed to farmers, provided raw materials for manufacturers, ransomed captives, carried on a pawn-broking business and helped the poor in other ways. Funds for these purposes were supplied in part by voluntary contribution, frequently thank offerings of food or money.

## II. Greeks Interested in Responsibility of State for Citizens:

Among the Greeks little private philanthropy developed and discussions of the duties of the well-to-do toward the poor are meagre. "It was the State which was the topic of paramount interest and it was the relations of the citizens to the State and the responsibilities of the State for its citizens, rather than the relations of man to man."—*Lilian Brandt*.

## III. Roman Ideas of Philanthropy:

Among the Romans private charity became rampant among office seekers, who courted popularity by giving costly entertainments, games, baskets of supplies, etc. Cicero deplored this custom and considered the practice of charity safest when limited to country and kinsmen. He said, "Kindness is shown to the needy either by personal service or gifts of money. The latter way is the easier but the former is nobler."

A century later Seneca said, "I must give to him that wants, yet so that I do not want myself; I must help him who is

perishing, yet so that I do not perish myself, unless by so doing I can save a great man or a great cause. I must give no benefit which it would disgrace me to ask for. . . . Every man must consider what his resources and powers are, so that we may not give either more or less than we are able."

The Empire developed a riotous system of public relief, distributing food, supplies and clothing to citizens who waited in bread-lines in the fourteen districts of Rome. Allowance for the support of children (similar to mothers' pensions) were provided, doubtless with a view to raising the birth rate. Free amusements were provided from the public treasury.

#### IV. The Jews:

Of all ancient people, among the Jews systematic and private charity had the most conspicuous place.

1. The *Jewish tithe* was a common practice and was evidently copied in very early times from the customs of the surrounding countries;

- a. Abraham carried the custom over from Chaldea,

Gen. 14: 18-20; Hebrews 7: 1-2.

Jacob observed the tithe,

Gen. 28: 20-22.

- b. It came to be recognized in Jewish law, Deut. 14: 22; Lev. 27: 30-32.

- c. A warning was uttered lest the Jews forget to observe it, Deut. 8: 10-20.

- d. A blessing was promised for its fulfillment, Mal. 3: 8-10.

## 2. Other specified offerings;

In addition to the tithe there were others, such as the trespass and free-will offerings. There were the "gifts of the poor"—the *gleanings* and the *corners*, the forgotten *sheaf*, the *grape* left on the vine and the *olive* on the bough, Lev. 19: 9-10; Deut. 24: 19-21; Ruth 2: 1-23.

These contributions for the relief of the poor were expected of every adult male. Various forms of alms were also required, such as the alms of the chest and the alms of the basket, and collectors were appointed in every city "to go amongst the

public to receive from everyone alms according to his means or according to a stated assessment." It is probable that the average Jew gave not less than one-fifth of his income. It was said,

"He who giveth a fifth part of his means obeyeth the Precept in the highest degree; he who giveth a tenth part of his means obeyeth the Precept in a medium degree; he who giveth less than a tenth part is a man of an evil eye."

There was an irreducible minimum of one-third of a shekel a year to be given in personal alms.

The Rabbis taught that it was even more meritorious to secure contributions than to give:

"He who influenceth others to give alms shall have greater reward than he who simply giveth."

3. Christ's observance of the tithe and tribute law, Matt. 17: 24-27, 22: 16-21.

## **V. Christ's Emphasis upon Hebrew Teaching of Love of God and Man**

Given in Lev. 19: 18. See Matt. 22: 36-40, 23: 23; Luke 11: 42.

## VI. In the Days of the Apostles there was a Common Acceptance of Personal Responsibility:

No required alms giving,	}	Acts 2: 44-45, Rom. 12: 8-15. Acts 4: 32-37.
No rules as to amount,		
No system of relief,		
No institutions,		
No relief officers,		

It was like the life of a family.

Giving as God hath prospered,

1 Cor. 16: 2.

Giving to their power and beyond,

2 Cor. 8: 1-5.

Relief organization grew up in time with deacons and "widows" as social workers.—*Lilian Brandt.*

## VII. The Tithe Revived:

Tithes were adopted by Christians under Constantine. This became a tax for the support of the Church, not a rule for voluntary benevolence.

Ambrose of Milan (340-397 A. D.) said, "God has reserved the tenth part unto Himself, and therefore it is not lawful for a man to retain what God has reserved for

Himself. To these He has given nine parts; for Himself He has reserved the tenth part; and if thou shalt not give to God the tenth part, God will take from thee the nine parts." "A good Christian pays tithes."

St. Thomas Aquinas—"Charity is a kind of friendship of man for God. Alms deeds have a spiritual effect on the doer if they are done out of love for God and one's neighbor, and if the beneficiary is moved to pray for his benefactor."

### **VIII. During the Feudal Period**

The prevailing conception of charity was a means of salvation through church organizations, which overshadowed the free play of private benevolence.

### **IX. Luther Eliminated the Factor of Personal Reward:**

He sounded a modern note when he said, "For those works only deserve to be called good which serve our neighbor and bring profit unto him."

"It is not right that one should work that another may be idle, and live ill that

another may live well, as is now the perverse abuse."

## **X. Wesley's Theory:**

"Earn all you can, save all you can, give all you can."

### **QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**

How far did the ancient world go toward acknowledging the obligations of stewardship?

What are the best reasons for giving?

Compare the law of the Jews and the principles of the New Testament as to giving.

What and how much is a tithe? Is it always exactly a tenth?

Is it such a separated portion of the income as is recognized by the individual to be the will of God?

What motives did Christ appeal to? How faithfully does the present generation of Christians follow the principles of Christian giving?

What could we do to quicken our response to this duty?



## **LESSON IV**

### **CHRIST'S SPIRIT OF SERVICE IN THE WORLD TO-DAY**

#### **I. Christianity is the Spirit of Love for our Fellowmen:**

Of Service for our Fellowmen,  
Of Sacrifice for our Fellowmen.

How far is this felt to-day in national,  
civic, social, and business life?

What gains have been made along these  
lines in our generation?

#### **II. What Motives Lead Men to Serve Their Fellows:**

See Proverbs 3:5-6-9-10; Psalm 128;  
Matt. 6:1-4, 19-21; 7:2-12-21, 10:42;  
25:31-46; Luke 6:38.

To what extent are such matters as  
health legislation, installing safety de-  
vices, supporting charities, the protecting  
of weak nations, etc., self-defensive meas-  
ures? Is there a constructive selfishness?

### III. Economic Soundness of Christ's Teachings:

How far is the world realizing that Christ was right when He said: "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you."

Roger Babson says: "Christ never asked anything unreasonable from an economic or psychological point of view. Once I supposed that loving one's enemies was simply duty and hence a sacrifice, but recent experiments suggest that this is the only practical way of winning and conquering them."

"A man's religion is good for nothing if he cannot take it with him into society, into business, into the court-room, into politics, making the light shine where now is darkness."—*Lyman Abbott*.

### IV. Does Stewardship go Further than the Spirit of Philanthropy and Social Consciousness?

"A Christian cannot give charity to God."—*Bishop Woodstock*.

"Stewardship is far more than giving. The spending of funds and the use of

property as a trustee for God are essential parts of it." See Parable of the Talents, Matt. 25: 14-30.

"The world for which Christ lived and died is our responsibility, *not* to convert it to a set of propositions or to make it subscribe to a formula, but to make it more possible for human beings to live a more abundant life in the spirit of Christ."

—*Roger Babson.*

## V. Stewardship as a Partnership:

1 Cor. 3: 9.

"God has made us working partners in his plans for a new world. We are not mere spectators. We are those upon whom He depends. He has no other plan than to work through us. That is life's solemn meaning and its high glory."

Can business be conducted according to the principles of stewardship?

Examples of men who have recognized God's partnership in their business: John Steward Kennedy, Jacob H. Schiff, John S. Huyler, Wm. Colgate, M. W. Baldwin. Read "A New Dynamic in World Conquest," by Luther E. Lovejoy, and

"My Silent Partner," in *American Magazine*, April, 1917.

"Life with its varied uses of time and talents, is the largest and most important part of our stewardship. The stewardship of money and things is a large part of our working partnership with God."

"I pluck an acorn from the green and hold it to my ear, and this is what it says to me: 'By and by the birds will come and nest in me. By and by I will furnish shade for the cattle. By and by I will go to build a strong house where men shall find shelter from the storm. By and by I will be the strong ribs of a vessel and the tempest will beat against me in vain while I carry my precious load across the Atlantic.' 'O, foolish little acorn, wilt thou be all this?' I ask, and the acorn answers, 'Yes, God and I.'—*Lyman Abbott*.

## VI. Qualities that Make Men Successful:

Faith, vision, courage, sympathy, thrift and industry are the qualities that make men and women successful in business and in every-day living. They are *spiritual* qualities.

"The Sermon on the Mount is an explanation of a great fundamental natural law which determines the ultimate success or failure of all business men."

—*Roger Babson.*

Can all the above qualities be exercised if the motive be self-interest? By an individual? an organization? a nation?

What effect will a realization of my partnership with God have upon my use of time? How much time can I spend in carrying out His plans?

A young business man said recently that he is planning his business so that he will be able to give half of his time to distinctively religious work.

The head of a large corporation cares year after year for all the concerns of a big Sunday School in a downtown district.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

What part of my daily scheme of living can I consider God's work in his world? My household tasks? my business? my social relationships? my recreation?

Is there some principle that will aid me in deciding these matters? Is it the principle of service? How shall we apply it?

What effect does the recognition of my stewardship have upon my zeal, poise, quietness of spirit, strength, effectiveness and joy?

What would be the effect upon the economic and social order if people actually acknowledged God as the owner of all capital and the senior partner in all business?



## LESSON V

### OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD MONEY

“One of the greatest factors standing between the present world situation and the winning of the world to Christ is the attitude toward money on the part of Christian men and women.”

—*Hungerford.*

“I will place no value upon anything I have or possess except in relation to the Kingdom of Christ.”—*Livingstone.*

“Money is power; money is opportunity; money is obligation.”

Christ has more to say about our attitude toward property than on any other one theme. Sixteen of his thirty-eight parables refer to it. He teaches that money giving is both the expression of and the way to a larger stewardship of life.

## I. Our Attitude Toward Acquiring Money:

—Eph. 4: 28.

It comes to some by inheritance; to others by hard work. God gives us the ability to work. "We are workers together with Him." In either case money is ours in trust.

How shall we earn it? "In a business in which, considering both the needs of people and our own capabilities, we can perform the best service. To illustrate: The truly religious man can farm, manufacture, transport or sell anything which makes people healthier, happier or more prosperous. He will be careful never to permit the end to justify the means."

—*Roger Babson.*

## II. Our Attitude Toward Spending:

May we not do as we please with our own?

1. "Money spending is a test of spirit and life; it is a power to do good or evil."

"What a man earns in the day goes into his pockets; what he spends in the evening goes into his character."

2. Influence of our expenditures upon character; our own, our friends and neighbors. What kinds of expenditures are unsocial?

"No enjoyment is right that does not help develop manhood and womanhood. What is a *luxury*? A comfort that enervates. What is a comfort? A luxury that does not enervate. The life is more than meat; the body is more than raiment. Personality is more than things. All things are right which contribute to character; all things are wrong which deteriorate character."—*Lyman Abbott*.

3. The real values of life.

Health of body and mind, knowledge, human relationships, beauty, spirituality.

"We determine with our dollars the kind of society we shall have."

### III. Our Attitude Toward Saving and Investing:

#### Our Motives:

For better living for ourselves, for our families, comfortable homes, education, travel, provision for the future.

**Our Temptations:**

To save to the point of missing the benefits of the present.

To become miserly, penurious.

To invest so closely we have nothing left to give and are always hard-up.

To try to get something for nothing; speculation, with its attendant losses and despondency.

How do the Scriptures class covetousness?—Exod. 20: 17; Luke 12: 15; 1 Cor. 6: 9-10; Eph. 5: 5; 1 Tim. 6: 9-10.

**IV. Our Attitude Toward Giving:**

What is meant by giving to God?

Sharing our resources with others:—

Our friends and family,

The poor—welfare organizations,

Sufferers in disaster,

Organizations promoting a better social order,

The Church and all church agencies.

**V. What a Dollar Will Do:**

One dollar spent for a lunch, lasts five hours.

One dollar spent for a necktie, lasts five weeks.

One dollar spent for a cap, lasts five months.

One dollar spent for an automobile, lasts five years.

One dollar spent for a waterpower or railroad grade, lasts for five generations.

One dollar spent in the service of God, lasts for eternity.

—*Roger Babson.*

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

What is the Christian aim for earning money?

Why do people like to spend money?

Why is waste a weakness?

How does saving without a great purpose make one miserly?

In what sense is money part of oneself?

How does our use of money reveal what we really are?

What is a luxury?

How does the amount which we spend for luxuries compare with the amount which we give?

Do we budget our personal incomes?

What responsibility have we for the budgets of organizations to which we belong?



## LESSON VI

### SYSTEMATIC GIVING

Prov. 3: 9-10; 1 Cor. 16: 2.

"People who do not know how much they give always give less than they think they do."—*Rev. J. H. Jowett, D.D.*

"Other things being equal the man of method is the man of achievement. He has the wind and the tide with him."

—*Dean Charles R. Brown.*

"In regard to money there is great advantage in its methodical use. Especially is it wise to dedicate a certain portion of our means to purposes of charity and religion. The greatest advantage in making a fund of this kind is that when we are asked to give, *competition is not between self on the one hand and any charity on the other*, but between the different purposes of religion and charity with one another, among which we ought to make the most careful choice."—*Gladstone.*

## **I. Systematic Giving**

Is giving according to a method instead of from impulse, and giving constantly instead of occasionally.

"If your bookkeeper made entries in your books only when he 'felt like it,' or if he put money in your cash drawer only when 'specially appealed to,' your treasury would get very low. If your cook made no provision for your meals and only served them when she 'happened to think of it,' you would soon starve."

—*Sherwood Eddy.*

## **II. What Principle or System shall I Adopt?**

"The work of religion, like all good work, must have a sound financial basis to exist."

## **III. Proportionate Giving**

Is giving a definite proportion of one's income, instead of a chance, undefined sum. This proportion should be determined thoughtfully, prayerfully. St. Paul says, "Let each contribute what he has decided on in his own mind, and not

do it reluctantly or under compulsion. It is a cheerful giver that God loves. Do not forget that he who sows sparingly will reap also sparingly, and that he who sows bountifully will reap also bountifully."

—II Cor. 9: 6-8.

"Decide in your own mind," says Paul, "Then *do it*."

#### IV. Is a Tithe the Standard?

As we have seen, this was the ancient standard practiced by the Jews and later revived by the early Christians, and advocated by many of the early fathers of the Church. The churches of America to-day are suggesting a scale of percentages that increases with the increase of income. The Government indicates its judgment by exempting from the income tax any part of the income up to 15% given in benevolences.

Circumstances can alter proportions, but not the *principle of proportionate giving*.

A fixed percentage might mean 5% this year, 10% next year, and a steady increase to double or treble that amount. Some

modern Christian stewards are giving 50% or more.

“According as God hath prospered ” is the test. Along with this, we should remember that the world’s need is an appeal to our faith, and if we rise to it, God has promised that He will “open the windows of Heaven and pour out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive.”

## V. If Christians Tithed What Would it Mean?

“The annual business turnover in this country amounts to over five hundred billion dollars. About four-fifths of this amount passes through the hands of church people. One percent of this amount would mean five million dollars a year. Assuming that there is a profit of ten percent on this turnover, it would mean that there is coming each year to the church people of this country income amounting to forty billion dollars. If tithing were in operation, this would give in tithes about *four billion dollars a year.*”

“The facts are that the church people of this country are giving less than one

percent of their income to church and missionary work.”—*Babson*.

Income of church  
members in United  
States .....\$40,000,000,000.00

If each member gave  
average of 10%..... 4,000,000,000.00

What they actually  
did give..... 400,000,000.00

*“One more revival—only one more is needed—the revival of Christian Stewardship; the consecration of the money power to God. When that revival comes, the Kingdom of God will come in a day.”*

—*Horace Bushnell*.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

**Does a Christian's responsibility end with the *payment* of a definite portion of the income?**

**What is my own church's teaching on Christian stewardship and proportionate giving?**

**How do we distribute that part of our income which we plan to give away?**

**Do we budget it? What is the value of doing so?**

**Here is an example of the way one woman does it:—**

For Church expenses	\$.....
For Church benevolence	\$.....
For Sunday School	\$.....
Y. W. C. A. at home	\$.....
Y. W. C. A. in China	\$.....
United charities	\$.....
Near East	\$.....
Red Cross	\$.....
Miscellaneous	\$.....



## LESSON VII

### PRAAYER

“The greatest unused power is prayer.”

—*Roger Babson.*

“Everyone that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.”

—*Luke 11: 10.*

“For what are men better than sheep or  
goats,

That nourish a blind life within the  
brain,

If, knowing God, they lift not hands of  
prayer

Both for themselves and those that call  
them friend?

For so the whole round earth is every  
way

Bound by gold chains about the feet of  
God.”

—*Tennyson.*

“Lord teach us to pray.”—*Luke 11: 1.*

## I. For Understanding:

### 1. Of the world's needs.

The first requisite for praying definitely about any object is to be informed about it. *Intelligent* prayer is *definite* prayer. "I have a kindly wish for all humanity; therefore it is easy enough to insert the word 'China' or 'India' or 'South America' when I pray with comfortable complacency that the good God will bless all men everywhere. But this is not discerning and prevailing prayer. With equal complacency I might pray for the denizens of the Milky Way or the inhabitants of Mars. I have no real longing, no actual desire. Human desire springs from human interest. One always may know the sincerity of his prayer by asking himself this question: 'Am I really interested?' At root, therefore, Christian prayer itself is a matter of human interest."

### 2. Of the courage and devotion of others.

Those who in the front ranks of God's army of advance, in our own country and in foreign lands are doing what we may not or dare not attempt.

"Giving thanks to God always for them; making mention of them in our prayers; remembering without ceasing their work of faith and labor of love and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ."—Thess. 1: 2-3.

"We have no right to send out missionaries unless we mean to back them up by prayer."—*John R. Mott*.

"God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you."

—1 Sam. 12: 23.

### 3. Of our part in God's plan.

"Let us ask God to show us personally anything that we can do to help, and make us careful not to hinder or stand in the way of what He wants done."

—*J. J. Kensington*.

"What wilt thou have *me* to do?"

—Acts 9: 6.

## II. For deepened Consecration:

—Matt. 10: 38-39; Rom. 12: 1.

Prayer is a personal relationship and experience, entered into with simple sincerity, thoughtful definiteness and rever-

ent purpose. Prayer is an expression of fellowship, partnership with God, a thinking with Him about our task and place, considering it in the light of His spirit and under His guidance.

Study the prayers of Christ.—Matt. 14: 23; Mark 1: 35; Luke 5: 15-16; 6: 12; 9: 18; 9: 28-29; John 17.

What did He pray for? How, when and where did He pray?

What did He teach on the subject of prayer?—Matt. 6: 5-15; Luke 11: 9-10.

### III. For Power:

“It is power we need; power that shall help us to solve our practical problems, power that shall help us to realize a high, individual, spiritual life, power that shall make us daring enough to act out all that we have seen in vision, all that we have learned in vision from Jesus Christ.”

Christ gathered strength for the daily toil and for special tasks by prolonged private prayer. Thus He prepared for the temptation, for the choosing of the twelve and for the final crisis of His life.

Dare we attempt to live in our own limited strength?

William E. Gladstone had his place of quiet prayer in the House of Parliament. Often he is quoted as saying, "I was greatly helped of God during the debate."

Lincoln found it necessary to pray in order to carry his burden. The great generals of the World War were praying men.

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."—Phil. 4: 13.

"A force more penetrating and powerful than gravitation or electricity is entrusted to us and we are responsible for the steady use of it and its direction to the noblest ends. Through intercession the handicapped, the sick, the feeble, the inhibited from action can find their place, can march shoulder to shoulder with the vigorous or perhaps can lead the march in the inspiring advance toward the Kingdom of God."—*Vida L. Scudder*.

#### IV. For the Kingdom of God:

"Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." There is a

connection between our prayers and the revealing of God's plan. We must share Christ's sympathy with human weakness and aspiration; we must share God's desires and purposes for men.

We have not learned the highest use of prayer when we have sought its blessing for ourselves. Christ spent days and nights praying for human needs and for the coming of the Kingdom of God. When we call ourselves Christians we commit ourselves to His ways and His cause.

"Herewith were ye called; because Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow in His steps.

—1 Pet. 2: 21.

"Too often we cry aloud to God to open the windows of Heaven and pour out His promised blessings until there shall not be room enough to receive them. Yet all the while we have in our pockets the only key that can open the windows, and we fail to use it."

Prayer is a unifying force.

"When they had prayed they were of one mind and of one soul.—Acts 4: 31-32.

Christ prayed, "That they all may be one that the world may believe."

—John 17: 21.

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

What is prayer?

How is prayer a stewardship?

Has my experience with prayer been as real to me as my experience with other of God's means of communication, light, sound, the telegraph, the wireless?

Do I rely on it as much?

What are the effects of continuous prayer for the extension of God's Kingdom and the strengthening of His workers? Upon ourselves? Upon the work?

Do we deepen the spiritual life of our Church and our Association through the Week of Prayer?

How could we make the period more valuable and far reaching?

Have we a responsibility for making prayer a greater comfort and reality?

How can this be done?

## THY KINGDOM COME

"O God, at whose commanding word light first sprang from darkness, we pray for the spreading of that light till the day break and the shadows flee away.

Send light into our inmost souls, we pray, lest some cherished iniquity shut thine ears to our prayers. Let the sunshine of Thy love stir our sterile natures into fruitfulness, and win from our stubborn soil a plenteous harvest of heavenly grain. Illumine the unknown trails of our natures, that hidden powers may come to light and yield their service to Thy Kingdom.

Shed light upon the dark places of the earth that the habitations of violence may be destroyed; let human misery melt away before the rising of the Sun of Righteousness.

How often have we prayed for the coming of Thy Kingdom, yet when it has sought to come through us we have sometimes barred the way; we have wanted it

in others, but not in our own hearts. We feel it is we who stand between man's need and Thee; between ourselves and what we might be; and we have not trust in our own strength, or loyalty, or courage.

O give us to love Thy will, and seek Thy Kingdom first of all. Sweep away our fears, our compromise, our weakness, lest at last we be found fighting against Thee. Amen."

—*W. E. Orchard.*

"O Thou, who art ever the same, grant us so to pass through the coming year with faithful hearts, that we may be able in all things to please Thy loving eyes. Amen."

—*Mozarabic, 700 A. D.*



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